

SKI HI Guidelines for Early Intervention Programs for Deaf or Hard of Hearing

What Characteristics Lead to Success?

Model Early Intervention Programs for Children who are deaf or hard of hearing and their families are programs that:

- Identify a single point of entry into early intervention services.
- Provide families with access to a wide variety of resources and professionals to meet the varied needs of children and families.
- Effectively address the needs of children with ALL degrees of hearing loss.
- Have high expectations (one month of language gain for every month of life, with procedures in place to evaluate why the child's language is not progressing at that rate and make necessary adjustments to get the child/family back on track.
- Design an assessment protocol that is used statewide, which is the only way to evaluate the efficacy of the program.
- Provide services that are family-centered, not child centered (goodbye to the bag of toys philosophy).
- Involve Deaf and Hard of Hearing adults in all facets of the program, from direct service to supervisory to consultative levels.
- Support ALL communication modes, with parents receiving support in developing skills in that mode in order to provide the child with full language access.
- Provide parents with assistance in learning how to observe their child and determine the best communication match for the child based on that child's ability at the time, with support for change when necessary.
- Have established a consensus within the state to support the EI system that is created.
- Have informed audiologists who agree to refer to state programs, even if they work for private agencies and the family can receive EI services there.

- Have private and public EI programs that have agreed to defer to the state plan and refer all children to the single point of entry for appropriate EI services.
- Hire highly trained Early Interventionists providing direct services: (Preference to professionals with a degree in Deaf Education, Audiology, or Speech/Language Pathology with ongoing training in providing family-centered services, or professionals with degrees in early childhood special education or early childhood development with ongoing training in issues related to deafness.
- Provide consistent statewide services, preferably by one agency or at least monitored by one agency.
- Initial training for all providers in a standardized, research-based curriculum.
- Provide on-going, in-depth training on topics that are vital to professionals in the field who are working with children who are deaf/hard of hearing and their families.
- Provide one-on-one mentoring in the field for newly hired Parent Advisors.
- Provide direct supervision from a highly trained, experienced supervisor.
- Provide statewide on-going program evaluation to determine direction of program services.
- Conduct yearly parent satisfaction surveys.
- Evaluate direct service providers/staff, audiologists and audiological staff, medical professionals, others.
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How Have States Developed Fluid, Seamless Services:

- Create a statewide advisory board/task force. May include the following: Part C Coordinator, Child find staff, EHDI, Health Department audiologists/private audiologists, Teachers of the Deaf, Private and public agencies serving the Deaf/Hard of Hearing, Deaf adults, Parents of deaf children, Speech Language Pathologists, Cochlear implant team members, Early intervention providers.
- Create screening, assessment, and intervention teams that can be accessed statewide.
- Create a state plan that everyone agrees with and follows.

- Create an established procedure/system for data management.
- Identify funding for UNHS and early intervention services.
- Ongoing attempt to gain legislation to enhance the lives of children and families and enhanced funding to provide effective services.
- Ongoing, statewide evaluation taking place and reviewed by key players with revisions in services as a result of the results.
- Honor the expertise of those individuals within your state and take advantage of those skills. No one knows everything! No one needs to do everything or can do everything alone. Shared and agreed upon responsibilities lead to success.
- Look outside of the box. What's always been done may not be the most ideal situation. However, don't knock success. If something is working, don't break it!
- NO TURF! NO TURF! NO TURF! NO TURF! NO TURF! NO TURF! If you find yourself feeling possessive of an aspect of services, check yourself.